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CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM AND STRENGTHENING OF LEGAL INSTITUTIONS

MEASURES TO REGULATE FIREARMS

Report of the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Cairo from 29 April to 8 May 1995, adopted a resolution entitled "Firearms regulation for purposes of crime prevention and public safety".[1] On the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its fourth session, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1995/27, on the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of the Ninth Congress. In section IV.A of that resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General to establish and maintain close cooperation with Member States and intergovernmental and other organizations by regularly exchanging data and other information on the regulation of firearms and to initiate a study on certain topics related to such regulation.

2. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1996/28, entitled "Follow-up action on firearms regulation for the purpose of crime prevention and public safety", requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its sixth session a report on measures to regulate firearms, including, as requested in its resolution 1995/27, section IV.A, recommendations for further concerted action at the national and transnational levels. In the same resolution, the Council approved a work plan[2] according to which a database would be established to enable the Secretariat to collect, through country reports, information on the regulation of firearms, to update that information and to disseminate it through periodical publications and workshops.

I. PROGRESS OF WORK

3. It should be noted that, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/27, section IV.A, the Secretary-General invited Governments to provide information on measures to regulate firearms. A summary of that information was presented to the Commission at its fifth session in a report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.15/1996/14 and Corr.1).

4. Thanks to the generous support of the Government of Japan, a project team was established as an advisory group to the Secretary-General, consisting of a projector coordinator and a research expert provided by the Government of Canada, governmental officials and representatives of the institutes comprising the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network. The team met three times. At its first meeting, held at Vienna from 18 to 20 December 1995, the team developed the methodology for an international study on the regulation of firearms. Due to limited funds, it was decided to focus on issues involving civilian-owned firearms. At a second meeting, held at Vienna from 2 to 3 May 1996, the team finalized the survey instrument (a questionnaire and its guidelines), to be tested in selected countries and distributed through national consultants identified by the regional institutes for the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders in countries selected by the team. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1996/28, endorsed the questionnaire and guidelines, and requested the Secretary-General to collect information and consult with Member States, on the basis of the questionnaire and guidelines and to analyse the information obtained.

5. At a third meeting, held at Montreal from 10 to 13 December 1996 and organized by the Government of Canada, the methodology for the preparation of the report was discussed.

6. As at 7 March 1997, 46 replies were obtained, either with the assistance of national consultants or through formal channels. Six additional States (Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Italy, Jordan and Switzerland) provided information on the issue without using the questionnaire. The number of replies received, in a relatively short time, may be regarded as indicative of the strong interest of the international community in the question of firearm regulation.

7. It should be mentioned that the full involvement and cooperation of the institutes comprising the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network from the beginning greatly facilitated the survey process. The four regional institutes (the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations; the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; and the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders) cooperated with the Secretariat in identifying national consultants in their regions and facilitating the implementation of the survey. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) assisted the Secretariat in collecting information from various sources, and the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy assisted the Secretariat in administrating the survey.

8. With the information received from Governments, a database has been established on the regulation of firearms. The database, which will be regularly updated, will be made available through the United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network. It is hoped that the exchange of information will assist Member States in developing common approaches to the regulation of firearms, including strategies for combating illicit trafficking in firearms.

II. RELEVANT INITIATIVES

9. The work plan for the implementation of the project on the regulation of firearms emphasizes the goal of collecting, analysing and disseminating information and cooperating with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in this field.

10. A number of intergovernmental organizations and other entities dealing with the subject on the regulation of firearms either requested information on the subject or made available to the Secretariat their own documentation. Among them there were the following:

(a) The P-8 Law Enforcement Conference on Illicit Traffic in Firearms, held in Tokyo from 12 to 14 November 1996, adopted a joint statement and expressed its support for the international study on firearm regulation being undertaken pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/27, section IV.A;

(b) The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) invited the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the Secretariat to give to the participants at the fourth International Symposium on Firearms and Explosives, held at Lyon, France, from 20 to 22 November 1996, a presentation on the progress being made on the international study on firearm regulation;

(c) The Customs Co-operation Council (also called the World Customs Organization) provided data on the number of firearms seized by customs in its member States and made useful comments on the further development of the database on the regulation of firearms;

(d) The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States, organized a number of important initiatives, including the Meeting of the Group of Experts on the Control of Arms and Explosives Related to Drug Trafficking, held at Caracas from 21 to 24 May 1996. The Meeting dealt with the status of the movement of illicit firearms and explosives and their impact on the security of individual member States; measures for the exchange of information regarding the illicit transnational movement of firearms and explosives; and the development of harmonized measures to control the importation and exportation of firearms and explosives;

(e) The Central American Security Commission elaborated a draft regional agreement for mutual legal assistance with respect to illegal trafficking in weapons;

(f) Various non-governmental organizations active in the field of firearm regulation contacted the Division with regard to the collection and provision of information on the regulation of firearms;

(g) The Centre for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research kept the Division informed of the progress made in disarmament affairs, especially the progress of the panel of governmental experts on small arms nominated by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/70 B, so as to improve the efficiency of the study and avoid duplication of work.

III. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON GATHERING INFORMATION ON AND ANALYSIS OF FIREARM REGULATION

11. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/28, a meeting of an expert group was held at Vienna from 10 to 14 February 1997. The expert group had four objectives: (a) to advise on the finalization of the international study on firearm regulation; (b) to make recommendations on the question of firearm regulation with a view to contributing to the discussion of the question at the sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; (c) to help to finalize the summary of the study; and (d) to improve the survey instrument.

12. The preliminary draft of the study, which will be made available to the Commission, takes into account the comments provided by the expert group. The final report, to be published at the end of 1997, will contain a review of statistical data obtained from the World Health Organization, Interpol, the World Customs Organization, the international crime (victim) survey and other sources. The recommendations of the expert group are presented in annex I to the present report. The summary of the study, as finalized by the expert group, is attached as annex II. The expert group made a number of suggestions concerning possible revision of the questionnaire and guidelines that will be considered by the Secretariat.

13. Offers by Brazil, India and the United Republic of Tanzania to host three regional workshops on the question of firearm regulation were accepted subject to further consultations. The workshops are to be convened in pursuance of the work plan approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1996/28.

IV. CONCLUSION AND PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMISSION

14. The project involving the international study on firearm regulation is of considerable relevance to the question of the security and safety of civilian populations.

15. Since its inception about one and one half years ago, the international study on firearm regulation has already yielded results. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice has provided constructive recommendations, enabling the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General to undertake the necessary action.

16. Within a short period of 14 months, the Secretariat, with the help of the project team and with financial assistance from the Government of Canada, managed to develop and disseminate a questionnaire to which 46 replies have been received so far. Substantive analyses and development of the database have advanced considerably, enabling the Commission to make informed policy choices.

17. In 1997 and 1998, the Secretary-General will continue to implement the activities outlined in the work plan approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1996/28, drawing on further recommendations that may be made by the Commission. Within that framework, in 1997, the Secretariat will continue to develop the database on the regulation of firearms, so as to incorporate it into the United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network, and will organize four regional workshops and publish the final report. In 1998, the Secretariat will organize an interregional meeting to review the results of the regional workshops and will publish the training material prepared as follow-up to the workshops.

18. The Commission is invited to review the progress achieved in the light of the results of the project. In this connection, it may wish to pay special attention to the summary and preliminary draft of the international study on firearm regulation, with a view to providing comments for its finalization. Taking into account the results presented in the summary, the Commission may wish to consider the recommendations of the expert group (annex I) with a view to recommending further action by the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General. The Commission is also invited to focus its discussion on regional developments related to the question of firearm regulation, which may be essential to finalizing preparations for the four regional workshops, to be conducted by the end of 1997 in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific and Europe. Such a discussion would enable the Secretariat to prepare for the workshops, placing due emphasis on regional needs and priorities.

19. It should be noted that, thanks to the generous support of the Government of Canada, the final report, planned for publication at the end of 1997, will be published in English and in other official languages of the United Nations.

20. In 1998 and later, the following activities may be planned, under the policy guidance of the Commission, subject to the availability of the required resources:

(a) Organization of interregional and national training courses or workshops on the regulation of firearms, on the basis of the outcome of the four regional workshops and an ad hoc expert group meeting;

(b) Convening of an ad hoc expert group meeting to design a new questionnaire for the second round of the international study on firearm regulation;

(c) Continued development and maintenance of databases on various aspects of the regulation of firearms, with a view to improving the exchange of such information among Member States and other interested parties;

(d) Publishing of an expanded global report on developments in the regulation of firearms, covering more countries, based on the results of the international study on firearm regulation, followed by reports on results obtained through subsequent surveys;

(e) Convening of an ad hoc expert group meeting on harmonization of the collection of data and information on the regulation of firearms;

(f) Development of model agreements on combating illicit trafficking in firearms;

(g) Development of an awareness programme for criminal justice administrators and the public concerning the prevention of violence involving firearms in the urban, school and family settings, based on an inventory of "good practices" in Member States;

(h) Extension of the scope of the study to include explosives.

21. The above proposals are examples of further measures that could be undertaken if additional resources (staff and expertise) are made available. In considering them, it is important to bear in mind that the resources of the Secretariat have been fully committed for other mandated activities and that, if any of the activities suggested above are to be carried out, the allocation of additional resources will be necessary. Related activities of the Division have so far been finalized through ad hoc arrangements (e.g. funds for expertise and contributions in kind). In the light of the considerable and growing interest of Member States in collecting and exchanging data and other information on the regulation of firearms, it is essential to provide financing for any future stages of this project in a more stable and orderly way; the financing should be commensurate with the increasing relevance of the project to public security and safety.

Notes

[1]*Report of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Cairo, 29 April-8 May 1995* (A/CONF.169/16/Rev.1), chap. I.

[2]*Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 10* (E/1996/30), paras. 73 and 74.

Annex I

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON GATHERING INFORMATION ON AND ANALYSIS OF FIREARM REGULATION HELD AT VIENNA FROM 10 TO 14 FEBRUARY 1997

1. The Expert Group Meeting on Gathering Information on and Analysis of Firearm Regulation, held at Vienna from 10 to 14 February 1997, has reached the following conclusions, to be brought to the attention of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its sixth session:

(a) Transnational illicit trafficking in firearms is a serious concern of Member States, contributing to unacceptable levels of homicide, other violent crime, suicide and accidents involving the use of firearms, resulting in tragic harm to victims within the Member States;

(b) There are established links between trafficking in illegal firearms, other serious crime and transnational organized criminal networks.

2. The expert group, cognizant of the diverse cultural, legal and political structures of Member States and in the light of the results of the international study on firearm regulation, has agreed on the following general conclusions:

(a) Import and export controls on firearms are not sufficient by themselves to prevent illicit trafficking in firearms;

(b) The absence of effective firearm regulation in one Member State can undermine not only the regulatory efforts but also the effective governance of other Member States;

(c) The manufacture of and trade in firearms for civilian use require effective domestic regulation and international cooperation and control;

(d) Effective domestic regulation of firearms requires cooperation between all levels of government, law enforcement agencies, business, the media and citizens to promote crime prevention, public health and the safety and security of individuals.

3. Accordingly, the Expert Group has made the following recommendations to the Secretary-General:

(a) The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be invited to urge those Member States that have not yet replied to the note verbale of the Secretary-General dated 10 October 1996 to do so, and to request the Secretariat to continue the collection of data and the publication of information on the regulation of firearms, along the lines of the revised survey format referred to in the report of the Expert Group, including ongoing and regular maintenance of a list of contact persons and organizations in each Member State with responsibility for the provision of such information, and to consider the creation of a database on national firearm legislation and regulation and on international agreements and arrangements related to the regulation of firearms.

(b) The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be invited to encourage Member States to consider, where they have not yet done so, regulatory approaches to the civilian use of firearms that include the following common elements:

(i) Regulations relating to the safe use and storage of firearms;

(ii) Appropriate penalties for serious offences involving the misuse of firearms;

(iii) Amnesty or similar programmes to encourage citizens to surrender illegal, unsafe or unnecessary firearms;

(iv) A licensing system to ensure that persons who are at high risk of misusing firearms are prevented from possessing and using firearms;

(v) A record-keeping system for firearms, including a requirement for appropriate marking of firearms at manufacture and at import to assist criminal investigations, discourage theft and ensure the accountability of owners;

(c) The Secretariat, in collaboration with the regional criminal justice institutes, should convene regional workshops to consider, *inter alia*, harmonization of the collection of information on firearm regulation, the provision of technical assistance, including training, the sharing of information and the need for implementing bilateral, regional or multilateral agreements on combating illicit trafficking in firearms, in order to ensure that all Member States have sufficient capacity in the area of firearm regulation;

(d) The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be invited to consider the development of a declaration of principles regarding civilian firearm regulation;

(e) The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be invited to develop a programme of continuous education for criminal justice administrators and of public education to raise the awareness of the links between firearms in civilian use and the unacceptable levels of violence in cities, communities and families and, through that programme, to encourage Member States to undertake similar programme;

(f) The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be invited to encourage Member States to ensure the active tracing of illegal firearms recovered by those States and the accurate and prompt response to request for such tracing from other Member States;

(g) The World Health Organization should be invited to analyse the data on firearms deaths that it collects and to provide those data to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice;

(h) The panel of governmental experts on small arms and the States participating in the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies should be invited to advise the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on measures to deal with the proliferation of small military arms in the civilian populations of Member States;

(i) The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) should be invited to undertake an examination of the firearm-tracing capabilities of its member States with a view to advising the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on the adequacy of those capabilities and any enhancements (such as a unique firearm identification system and the development of a universal definition or classification of firearms for civilian purposes, taking into account the differences in regulations and standards in States) that may increase the level of international cooperation required to effectively combat illicit trafficking in firearms;

(j) The Customs Co-operation Council (also called the World Customs Organization) should be invited to undertake an examination of international customs practices relating to the movement of firearms for civilian purposes (including such matters as licensing, monitoring, standard protocols, including a common import and export certificate, and an advance notification system) and to provide advice to the Commission on Crime

Prevention and Criminal Justice to enable Member States to have better assurance of the effectiveness of controls of the international movement of firearms;

(k) The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be invited to consider convening a meeting of relevant international organizations with a view to improving the coordination of the collection of data necessary for a more complete understanding of the issues affecting the regulation of firearms;

(l) The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be invited to give high priority to post-conflict peace-building technical cooperation projects designed to re-establish or strengthen the rule of law relating to regulation of the use of firearms by civilians;

(m) The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be invited to ensure that appropriate links are made within the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme to recognize the relevance of firearm regulation issues to technical assistance initiatives that may be taken in relation to the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (General Assembly resolution 48/104), to promote justice for victims of crime and to deal with problems related to children and youth who are victims or perpetrators of crime.

4. Finally, the Expert Group wishes to call the attention of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to the serious concern expressed by members of the Expert Group about the use of explosives by criminal elements and the consequent tragic harm caused to civilians and suggests that it should consider developing a separate study on that issue.

Annex II

SUMMARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDY ON FIREARM REGULATION*

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INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to the Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/27, section IV.A paragraphs 7 and 8, adopted on the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its fourth session, the present study on firearm* regulation deals with, *inter alia*, the following topics:

(a) Criminal cases, accidents and suicides in which firearms are involved, including the number of such cases and the number of victims involved, and the status of firearm regulation by the law enforcement authorities;

(b) The situation with regard to transnational illicit trafficking in firearms;

(c) National legislation and regulations relevant to firearm regulation;

(d) Relevant initiatives for firearm regulation at the regional and interregional levels.

2. An additional purpose of the study was to determine what information could be collected on an ongoing basis.

3. The international project team established for the study determined at the outset that the research should: (a) be descriptive and neutral; (b) deal with only firearms, excluding landmines and other armaments; and (c) focus solely on civilian regulations and civilian-owned firearms, excluding the military.

4. Given the need to determine the nature of the information that could feasibly be exchanged on an ongoing basis and the fact that no similar international survey had previously been undertaken, the project team considered the study to be exploratory in nature and determined that a series of questions on each topic would be appropriate, even though it was expected that not all questions could be answered by all States. In addition, a blend of quantitative questions (eliciting yes/no or numerical answers) and qualitative questions (narrative, open-ended) were selected. The project team anticipated that it would be difficult for States to numerically represent the nature and extent of any firearm smuggling problem; hence, verbal descriptions of issues were requested. Generally, the level of detail to be pursued in the questionnaire was limited by the budget available to the study and the expected resource limitations of Governments, which would limit their ability to respond to a new questionnaire on firearms. The detail in the survey instrument was also limited by the need to collect information within a short period of time, enabling the Secretary-General to report to the Commission in time for its sixth session.

5. A draft of the survey instrument was tested in Canada, Japan and Singapore. On the basis of the pretests, revisions were made to the survey instrument. To help ensure the accuracy of replies to the survey, the survey instrument was translated into Spanish by the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. In cooperation with the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, the Canadian Government translated the survey instrument into French. The English version of the survey instrument was distributed to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its fifth session as a conference room paper (E/CN.15/1996/CRP.5) and was subsequently endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1996/28.

6. In addition to the information that would be collected through the survey, it was deemed important by the project team to consult with other international organizations and, where possible, to collect other international data pertaining to firearms. The other organizations included the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the Customs Co-operation Council (also called the

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*Firearm is any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; or the frame or receiver of any such weapon.

World Customs Organization). Other international data sources to be examined were the international crime (victims) survey, coordinated by the Department of Justice of the Netherlands, in conjunction with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. The final research report will contain an annex with additional findings.

7. Sufficient funds were available to invite approximately 50 States to participate in the survey. The project team selected member States of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, on the basis of equitable geopolitical representation. The Secretary-General in a note verbale dated 10 October 1996, invited all other Member States to participate in the project pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/28.

8. Ten States responded to the survey as a result of the note verbale. Other replies to the survey were provided by national consultants. Four members of the project team, who represented a regional criminal justice institute, had agreed to consult governments and to identify a national consultant who would assume responsibility for the completion of the survey questionnaire. Representatives of regional institutes coordinated the surveys within their regions and answered the follow-up questions of national consultants as required. In most cases, in exchange for the reimbursement of costs for the collection of data, contracts were established with national consultants. The contracts were administered by the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy.

9. Completed survey questionnaires were received by 7 March 1997 from 46 States. The project team noted that, given the number of States and the criteria that had been applied to the selection of States, it should not be assumed that the results of the research study were globally representative. Nonetheless, the study sample could be viewed as a reasonable cross-section of States. The participating States are listed according to geopolitical region, are as follows:

States participating in the survey as at 7 March 1997, by region

Africa	*Asia*	*Europe*	*Latin America and the Caribbean*	*North America*	*Oceania*
Burkina Faso	China	Austria	Argentina	Canada	Australia
Guinea	India	Belarus	Brazil	United States	New Zealand[a]
South Africa	Japan	Belgium	Costa Rica		Papua New Guinea
Tunisia	Malaysia	Czech Republic	Ecuador[a]		
Uganda	Philippines	Denmark[a]	Jamaica		
United Republic of Tanzania	Singapore	Estonia	Mexico[a]		
Zambia	Viet Nam	Finland	Peru		
		Germany	Trinidad and Tobago		
		Greece[a]			
		Hungary			
		Luxembourg[a]			
		Poland			
		Republic of Moldova[a]			
		Romania[a]			
		Russian Federation			
		Slovakia[a]			
		Spain			
		Sweden[a]			
		United Kingdom			

[a]State responding to the survey as a result of the note verbale dated 10 October 1996 from the Secretary-General.

10. The estimated total population of the responding States for the year 1995 is 3.7 billion, representing 65 per cent of the estimated world population of 5.7 billion people.[a] Twenty-two of the States were developing countries and 24 were developed countries.

11. Responses were coded into a database, a draft report was prepared and a data validation process was begun. This involved, first of all, discussions with participants in the Expert Group Meeting on Gathering Information on and Analysis of Firearm Regulation, held at Vienna from 10 to 14 February 1997. Those participants who had been involved in preparing their country's response to the survey were asked to clarify their replies and to comment on their interpretations of the survey questions. These included representatives of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Jamaica, Japan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America and Zambia. Subsequently, all respondents were sent copies of the tables from the draft report, together with some clarifications of terminology (e.g. the definition of "prohibit") and a correction to the French translation of the questionnaire. The inclusion of tables based on codifications of the narrative questions provided an opportunity for respondents to add to the information included in their original narrative responses. Amendments and additions have been received from the following 22 States: Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Guinea, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States.

12. The seven sections below correspond to the seven parts of the survey instrument and appear in the same order as in the survey instrument.

I. GENERAL FIREARM REGULATION

13. The majority of responding States indicated that they regulated firearms to some extent; they prohibited* the ownership of certain types of long guns** and handguns*** or they further restricted the ownership of all long guns and handguns (see table 1).

14. The majority of responding States restricted in some manner the import, export and manufacture of all long guns and handguns. The majority of States also prohibited certain long guns and handguns from being imported, exported and manufactured. Very few States reported no restrictions or prohibitions of any kind (see tables 2 and 3).

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*A data validation process has revealed that, in some national legislations, the word "prohibited" is used in the context that it is prohibited to own a firearm without obtaining the necessary licence. In the survey instrument, the word "prohibited" was intended to indicate that ownership of certain types of firearms was not permitted under any circumstances.

**The term long gun includes the following:

(a) Rifle: a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder, and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of the explosive in a fixed metallic cartridge to fire only a single projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger.

(b) Shotgun: a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder, and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of the explosive in a fixed shotgun shell to fire through a smooth bore either a number of ball shots or a single projectile for each single pull of the trigger.

***A handgun is any firearm that has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired by the use of a single hand; and any combination of parts from which a handgun can be assembled.

Table 1. Prohibition or restriction of the ownership of firearms, by State

State	*Ownership prohibited*[a]		*Ownership restricted*	
	Long guns	*Handguns*	*Long guns*	*Handguns*
Argentina	all	certain	-	all
Australia	certain	certain	all	all
Austria	certain	certain	certain	all
Belarus	certain	all	certain	all
Belgium	certain	none	certain	all
Brazil	certain	certain	certain	certain
Burkina Faso	none	none	none	all
Canada	certain	certain	all	all
China	none	all	all	all
Costa Rica	certain	certain	certain	certain
Czech Republic	certain	certain	certain	certain
Denmark	none	none	all	all
Ecuador	all	certain	all	certain
Estonia	certain	certain	certain	certain
Finland	none	none	all	all
Germany	none	none	all	all
Greece	*b*	*b*	all	all
Guinea	certain	certain	certain	certain
Hungary	certain	certain	all	all
India	certain	certain	all	all
Jamaica	certain	certain	all	all
Japan	certain	all[c]	all	all
Luxembourg	all	all	all	all
Malaysia	all	all	all	all
Mexico	certain	certain	certain	certain
New Zealand	certain	certain	all	all
Papua New Guinea	certain	none	all	all
Peru	certain	certain	certain	certain
Philippines	certain	certain	certain	certain
Poland	certain	none	certain	certain
Republic of Moldova	certain	certain	none	certain
Romania	none	none	*b*	*b*
Russian Federation	certain	all	certain	all
Singapore	certain	certain	all	all
Slovakia	certain	certain	certain	certain
South Africa	certain	certain	certain	certain
Spain	certain	certain	all	all
Sweden	none	none	all	all
Trinidad and Tobago	certain	certain	all	all
Tunisia	none	none	all	all
Uganda	none	none	all	all
United Kingdom	certain	certain	all	all
United Republic of Tanzania	certain	certain	all	all
United States	certain	certain	all	all
Viet Nam	certain	all	certain	-
Zambia	none	none	all	certain
Total responses				
"All"	4	7	26	30
"Certain"	31	26	16	14
"None"	10	12	2	-

[a] A data validation process has revealed that, in some national legislations, the word "prohibited" is used in the context that it is prohibited to own a firearm without obtaining the necessary licence. In the survey instrument, the word "prohibited" was intended to indicate that ownership of certain types of firearms was not permitted under any circumstances.

[b] No response.

[c] As an exception, team members or candidates for international sport shooting competitions recommended by the Japan Amateur Sports Association may apply for licences for sporting pistols.

Table 2. Prohibition or restriction of the import of firearms, by State

	Prohibited import		*Restricted import*	
State	*Long guns*	*Handguns*	*Long guns*	*Handguns*
Argentina	all	none	all	some
Australia	some	some	all	all
Austria	some	some	some	all
Belarus	some	some	some	some
Belgium	some	none	some	some
Brazil	some	some	all	all
Burkina Faso	[a]	[a]	all	all
Canada	some	some	all	all
China	some	some	some	some
Costa Rica	some	some	some	some
Czech Republic	none	none	none	none
Denmark	none	none	all	all
Ecuador	all	some	all	some
Estonia	some	some	some	some
Finland	none	none	all	all
Germany	none	none	all	all
Greece	[a]	[a]	all	all
Guinea	some	all	some	all
Hungary	some	some	all	all
India	some	some	all	all
Jamaica	some	some	all	all
Japan	some	all[b]	all	all
Luxembourg	all	all	all	all
Malaysia	all	all	all	all
Mexico	some	some	some	some
New Zealand	none	none	all	all
Papua New Guinea	none	none	all	all
Peru	all	all	some	some
Philippines	some	some	all	all
Poland	none	none	all	all
Republic of Moldova	some	some	some	some
Romania	none	none	none	none
Russian Federation	some	all	some	all
Singapore	some	some	all	all
Slovakia	some	some	some	some
South Africa	some	some	some	some
Spain	none	none	all	all
Sweden	none	none	all	all
Trinidad and Tobago	all	all	all	all
Tunisia	some	some	all	all
Uganda	none	none	all	all
United Kingdom	some	some	all	all
United Republic of Tanzania	some	some	all	all
United States	some	some	all	all
Viet Nam	all	all	[a]	[a]
Zambia	some	some	all	all
Total responses				
"All"	7	8	30	31
"Some"	26	23	13	12
"None"	11	13	2	2

[a] No response.

[b] As an exception, team members or candidates for international sport shooting competitions recommended by the Japan Amateur Sports Association may apply for licences for sporting pistols.

Table 3. Prohibition or restriction of the export of firearms, by State

State	Prohibited export		Restricted export	
	Long guns	*Handguns*	*Long guns*	*Handguns*
Argentina	none	none	none	none
Australia	some	some	all	all
Austria	none	none	some	some
Belarus	some	some	some	some
Belgium	none	none	some	some
Brazil	some	some	some	some
Burkina Faso	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]
Canada	some	some	all	all
China	some	some	some	some
Costa Rica	some	some	some	some
Czech Republic	none	none	none	none
Denmark	none	none	all	all
Ecuador	all	all	all	all
Estonia	some	some	some	some
Finland	none	none	all	all
Germany	none	none	all	all
Greece	all	[a]	all	all
Guinea	some	some	all	all
Hungary	some	some	all	all
India	some	some	all	all
Jamaica	some	some	all	all
Japan	some	all	all	all
Luxembourg	all	all	all	all
Malaysia	all	all	all	all
Mexico	some	some	some	some
New Zealand	some	some	some	some
Papua New Guinea	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]
Peru	all	all	all	all
Philippines	some	some	all	all
Poland	none	none	all	all
Republic of Moldova	some	some	some	some
Romania	none	none	none	none
Russian Federation	none	none	some	all
Singapore	some	some	all	all
Slovakia	some	some	some	some
South Africa	some	some	some	some
Spain	some	some	all	all
Sweden	[a]	[a]	some	all
Trinidad and Tobago	all	all	all	all
Tunisia	all	all	-	-
Uganda	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]
United Kingdom	some	some	all	all
United Republic of Tanzania	some	some	all	all
United States	some	some	all	all
Viet Nam	all	all	[a]	[a]
Zambia	some	[a]	some	some
Total responses:				
"All"	8	8	23	25
"Some"	24	22	15	13
"None"	10	10	3	3

[a]No response.

15. Twenty-five States reported changes in the previous five years in either the legislation or the administration regarding the civilian ownership of firearms; eight States reported specifically that there had been no such changes; and the replies of two States suggested that there had been no such changes. States often noted that several changes had been made to the restrictive nature of the regulatory system during the previous five-year period.

16. The authority for firearm legislation was most often at the national level. The national Governments of a few States (Australia, China, Czech Republic, Finland, United Kingdom and United States) shared regulatory responsibilities with regional governments. In all responding States the import and export of firearms were regulated at the national level, although in many States, the administration and enforcement of the regulations were the responsibility of regional and even local governments.

17. Most States adopted similar policies with regard to the levels of prohibition and restriction of both the import and export of firearms, although several States that restricted all import of guns did not place the same degree of restriction on their exportation. Very few States reported no restriction or prohibition of any kind.

18. Few States reported the existence of formal agreements with other States on the regulation of firearms, particularly at the bilateral level. States noted informal agreements or reported that firearms were covered by larger agreements concerning trade or customs controls. Certain regional agreements were mentioned. Council of the European Communities directive 91/477/EEC of 18 June 1991[b] foresees a common classification of firearms and also regulation of the movement of firearms from one country to another. In eastern and southern African States, there is a formal agreement to share criminal intelligence and work cooperatively to curb the illegal trade in firearms and ammunition across borders. In the recent Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, 33 States have agreed to promote transparency and greater responsibility in the transfer of armaments, particularly with regard to States or regions where there is risk of conflict.

II. OWNERSHIP AND REGULATION OF FIREARMS

19. Most responding States allowed the ownership of handguns for the purposes of hunting, target shooting, collection and the protection of person or property. Only 7 States did not permit the ownership of handguns for target shooting.

20. Thirty-nine responding States reported a licensing requirement for the purchase of all firearms (i.e. long guns and handguns). Six others reported a licensing requirement for only certain firearms. A variety of licensing requirements were noted by States. The requirements for firearm ownership included training, a fee, a background check of the applicant and self-identification. Twenty-one States indicated that the licensing process varied according to the class of firearm. In a large number of States the purchase of a firearm was prohibited or restricted on the basis of the individual's age (in 46 States), criminal record (in 43 States), mental illness (in 44 States) or domestic violence (in 32 States).

21. The majority of States reported the existence of an administrative record system for firearm owners. Twenty-four States had a system maintained at the national level and the remaining 11 reported systems maintained at the regional or local level. Information was maintained on each firearm owned in virtually all States. Fourteen States indicated that the system was automated. No State reported that the public had access to such information.

Table 4. Firearm licensees, firearm owners and firearms per 1,000 persons and share of households with at least one firearm, by State

State	*Firearm licensees per 1,000 persons*	*Firearm owners per 1,000 persons*	*Firearms per 1,000 persons*	*Share of households with at least one firearm (percentage)*
Argentina	12.94	..	41.59	*a*
Australia	58.60	..	195.90	16
Austria	41.02	..	..	..
Belarus	*a*	*b*	16.50	*b*
Belgium	*a*	*a*	*a*	*a*
Brazil	*a*	8.18	*a*	*a*
Burkina Faso	< 0.10	*a*	< 0.24	0.06
Canada	20.41	102.03	241.48	26
China	*b*	*b*	*a*	*b*
Costa Rica	44.66	44.66	65.95	..
Czech Republic	-	17.56	27.58	4.3
Denmark	4.02	*a*	162.74	8
Ecuador	*a*	*a*	17.45	5
Estonia	20.83	..	28.56	9
Finland	215.39	*a*	411.20	50
Germany	24.51	122.56	..	10
Greece	0.30	0.30	77.00	..
Guinea	*a*	108.86	*b*	*b*
Hungary	8.31	..	14.54	..
India	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*
Jamaica	6.48	6.48	7.35	..
Japan	1.91	1.91	3.28	0.57
Luxembourg	44.23	44.23	..	*a*
Malaysia	7.05	7.05	7.05	0.007
Mexico	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*
New Zealand	70.20	112.33	308.90	20
Papua New Guinea	*a*	11.63	11.63	..
Peru	7.65	5.95	7.65	6
Philippines	5.29	*b*	6.97	*b*
Poland	3.40	..	5.30	..
Republic of Moldova	6.00	6.00	6.61	0.76
Romania	2.69	2.69	2.97	*b*
Russian Federation	*a*	21.55	24.49	..
Singapore	0.24	0.24	0.24	..
Slovakia	*b*	17.13	31.91	*b*
South Africa	43.41	43.41	84.41	5
Spain	63.09	*a*	64.69	..
Sweden	88.93	91.03	246.65	20
Trinidad and Tobago	5.99	5.99	6.06	3
Tunisia	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.2
Uganda	*b*	*b*	0.14	..
United Kingdom	14.84	14.84	36.58	4
United Republic of Tanzania	2.33	2.33	2.33	*a*
United States	-	..	..	41
Viet Nam	*a*	*a*	*a*	*a*
Zambia	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*
Range	0.1-215	0.2-122	0.1-411	0.007-50

Note: The data are "as reported" in the survey. There are often differences in the way in which States compile statistics. International comparisons should therefore be made with caution.

[a] No response.

[b] Not reasonably available (i.e. potentially available but cannot be obtained with reasonable effort).

22. Levels of firearm ownership varied highly among countries. As shown in table 4, the rates of individual firearm owners in each country ranged from less than 1 per 1,000 persons to more than 120. The number of firearms ranged from less than 1 per 1,000 persons to more than 400. The number of individuals licensed to own firearms ranged from less than 1 per 1,000 persons to more than 200 per 1,000 persons. The percentage of households with at least one firearm varied between less than 0.01 per cent and 50 per cent.

III. FIREARM POSSESSION AND USE

23. Separate questions were asked of countries in regard to the possession and use of firearms, given the possibility that some firearms might be owned but not used (e.g. for the sole purpose of collection) or, in some circumstances, that some firearms might be possessed and used but not owned (e.g. borrowed from another).

24. Forty-four States allowed the possession of firearms for the purposes of hunting and target shooting. Thirty-four also permitted the possession of firearms for the purpose of collection and for protection of person or property. In some cases, States noted that there were greater restrictions on the possession and use of handguns than on the possession and use of long guns.

25. In 28 States, an individual was permitted to use another individual's firearm, though in many cases the borrower was required to have a legal permit to own a firearm. That requirement was sometimes waived if the borrower was under the direct supervision of the lawful owner.

26. Thirty-seven States reported the existence of regulations for the storage of firearms. Twenty-nine indicated that firearms were required to be stored unloaded and/or that ammunition was to be stored in a certain manner. Thirty-five reported regulations regarding the transportation of firearms.

27. Thirty-seven States reported the existence of regulations on the carrying of firearms for the purpose of self-protection. The majority of States required a permit or licence. Thirteen States explained that such permits were generally granted in a restricted manner, for example, for the purpose of private security or where there was clear evidence of risk to the permit applicant. Some States noted that firearms were not to be carried in a public place or gathering.

IV. LEGAL MANUFACTURE AND TRADE OF FIREARMS

28. Governments were asked whether legal businesses existed in their countries that manufactured, imported and exported firearms.* Twenty-eight replied that there were businesses that manufactured firearms; all but four reported that the firearms were produced for foreign markets, in addition to their domestic market.

29. In 26 countries there were businesses that exported firearms to foreign markets. Forty-three States reported the existence of legal firearm import.

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*States were not asked to describe the magnitude of manufacturing and trade activities, as such a request would have resulted in difficulties related to measurement.

V. FIREARM SMUGGLING AND OTHER ILLEGAL DEALINGS

30. Respondents were asked the question: "According to available evidence, how often are firearms, firearm components or ammunition brought into your country for the purpose of illegal sale or other illegal dealings?" The response categories were "frequent", "some", "few" and "none". Identical questions were asked regarding the illegal export and manufacture of firearms. The replies are summarized in table 5. For each type of illegal activity, respondents were also asked to provide a description of significant examples.

31. Most States reported problems with illicit sales and distribution of firearms. Many also reported some level of illegal importation of firearms: 8 reported a frequent problem, 17 reported some problem, 10 reported evidence of a few incidents and only 5 indicated that there was no such illegal importation. Illegal importation was more often reported for firearms and ammunition than for component parts of firearms.

32. Judging from the descriptive case study information provided by the respondents, there appears to be a problem involving firearms being illegally transported through one or more countries between the time of their manufacture and their ultimate recovery by law enforcement officers.

33. Over 20 States provided detailed descriptions of the methods used to smuggle firearms, ranging from discrete incidents involving undeclared firearms at airports, or firearms concealed in motor vehicles at border crossings, to much larger incidents involving greater sophistication, large numbers of firearms and co-conspirators. Many types of firearms were mentioned; they were manufactured in different countries and received through various other countries. Some States noted illegal shipments involving surplus military arms. States also indicated that illegally imported firearms were used for different purposes, including organized crime, the drug trade, armed robbery, tribal fights and rebellion.

34. Fewer States reported a problem with the illegal export of firearms. Sixteen States indicated there was no evidence, 15 reported evidence of a few incidents, 6 reported evidence of some incidents and 3 reported evidence of frequent incidents. Illegal exports may often be less visible to States than illegal imports, as most border controls are focused on goods entering rather than leaving the country. The types of incidents involving the illegal export of firearms that were described by States were similar to those involving the illegal importation of firearms.

35. Most responding States did not have substantial evidence of the illegal manufacture of firearms. Twenty States reported no evidence, 8 indicated evidence of a few incidents, 10 reported some evidence and 3 reported frequent evidence. Of the incidents described, most involved locally made, low-power firearms that were sold in domestic markets.

36. Though the manner of maintaining statistics on the number of stolen and missing firearms often varied from State to State, 24 States were able to provide data for one year or more. Figures ranged from a low of one firearm to a high of 17,492. Many States provided examples of firearm theft or described patterns of such theft. One pattern noted by some was the theft of firearms occurring as part of a residential burglary or automobile break-in. Also noted were thefts from shipments of firearms at the point of customs.

37. It was generally accepted by the States in the survey that illegal firearms, whether stolen, illegally imported or manufactured, were sold to criminals or organized criminal groups. In some cases, illegal firearms were purchased by civilians for the purpose of protection, particularly in unstable regions.

Table 5. Frequency of illegal import, export and manufacture of firearms, by State

State	*Import*	*Export*	*Manufacture*
Argentina	*a*	few	some
Australia	some	few	none
Austria	some	some	few
Belarus	few	few	none
Belgium	some	few	none
Brazil	frequent	some	frequent
Burkina Faso	some	none	none
Canada	some	some	few
China	some	few	some
Costa Rica	some	none	none
Czech Republic	few	frequent	some
Denmark	*b*	*b*	*b*
Ecuador	frequent	few	some
Estonia	some	some	few
Finland	few	few	none
Germany	frequent	frequent	none
Greece	few	none	none
Guinea	frequent	some	frequent
Hungary	*a*	*a*	*a*
India	frequent	none	some
Jamaica	frequent	few	none
Japan	some	none	few
Luxembourg	none	none	none
Malaysia	some	few	none
Mexico	*a*	*a*	*a*
New Zealand	few	few	few
Papua New Guinea	frequent	*a*	frequent
Peru	few	none	none
Philippines	few	few	few
Poland	some	few	some
Republic of Moldova	none	none	none
Romania	few	none	none
Russian Federation	some	some	none
Singapore	none	none	none
Slovakia	*b*	..	..
South Africa	frequent	few	some
Spain	some	few	none
Sweden	*a*	*a*	*a*
Trinidad and Tobago	some	none	few
Tunisia	none	none	none
Uganda	few	none	none
United Kingdom	some	few	few
United Republic of Tanzania	some	none	some
United States	few	frequent	some
Viet Nam	none	none	none
Zambia	some	none	some
Total			
"Frequent"	8	3	3
"Some"	17	6	10
"Few"	10	145	8
"None"	5	16	20

[a]No response.

[b]Not reasonably available (i.e. potentially available but cannot be obtained with reasonable effort).

38. Thirty-one States indicated that they employed firearms-tracing technology,* whereby firearms were tracked from the manufacturer to different purchasers. Forty-three stated that law enforcement officials were trained in the identification of firearms.

39. Almost all States provided information on the sources used to determine the origins of firearms recovered by officials. Many States referred to their national registries on firearms or firearm owners. At the international level, Interpol was frequently mentioned as an important resource; for countries within its proximity, the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms was also mentioned as a frequent resource. Several States noted limitations of the information sources available to them, such as incomplete or inaccurate information on firearm registries or the need to check several different record systems, which posed a burden on resources.

40. States generally reported severe maximum penalties for offenders apprehended for crimes of firearm smuggling or trafficking. Fourteen States had maximum terms of imprisonment of between 5 and 10 years. Serious cases in Greece, Slovakia and South Africa could result in prison terms of 20 years, and cases in India, Jamaica, Japan and Uganda could lead to life imprisonment. Singapore noted that the death penalty could be imposed on firearm smugglers. States had varied offence structures for smuggling and trafficking; for example, precise charges can be determined by the number or type of firearms involved.

VI. STATISTICS ON THE MISUSE OF FIREARMS

41. States were requested to provide data on deaths resulting from firearms and crimes involving firearms for the previous five years. In many instances, depending upon the particular information requested, States could not provide the statistics or were only able to provide partial data.

42. Figures for the most recent year available on homicide, homicide involving firearms, suicide, suicide involving firearms and accidental deaths involving firearms per 100,000 persons are presented in table 6. The total number of deaths involving firearms ranged from 0.07 to 26.97 per 100,000 persons. Of the 23 States that were able to provide such data, 17 indicated that the number of such deaths was between 1 and 5 per 100,000 persons.

43. The number of suicides involving firearms reported by States ranged from 1 to 18,940. As shown in table 6, the number of such deaths ranged from nearly 0 to 7.23 per 100,000 persons. Compared with the total number of suicides (committed both with and without firearms), there was considerable variability with respect to the proportion of suicides committed with firearms. The share of suicides committed with firearms ranged from a low of nearly 0 per cent to a high of 70 per cent.

44. The rate for accidental death involving firearms was the lowest of the three types of death rates involving firearms. The figures ranged from 0 to 0.75 per 100,000 persons (see table 6). The absolute number of accidental deaths involving firearms in one year ranged from 0 to 2,375.

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*Tracing is the systematic tracking of firearms and explosives from manufacturer to purchaser (and/or possessor) for the purpose of aiding law enforcement officials in identifying suspects involved in criminal violations, establishing stolen status and proving ownership.

Table 6. Deaths involving firearms, per 100,000 persons, by State

	Homicide		*Suicide*			
State	*Total*	*Homicide involving firearms (1)*	*Total*	*Suicide involving firearms (2)*	*Accidental death involving firearms (3)*	*Death involving firearms (total, 1, 2 and 3)[a]*
Argentina[b]	3.83	1.50	..	..	..	..
Australia	2.40	0.56	12.77	2.38	0.11	3.05
Austria	2.14	0.53	*c*	*c*	*c*	..
Belarus	9.86	*d*	27.26	*d*	0.23	..
Belgium	3.87	..	..	..	..	..
Brazil	29.17	25.78	0.63	0.44	0.75	26.97
Burkina Faso	0.04	..	0.95	0.14	0.05	..
Canada	1.99	0.60	12.88	3.35	0.13	4.08
China	*c*	*c*	*c*	*c*	*c*	..
Costa Rica	5.52	2.57	6.54	1.61	0.29	4.47
Czech Republic	2.80	0.92	9.88	1.01	0.07	2.00
Denmark	*d*	*d*	*d*	*d*	*d*	..
Ecuador	*c*	*c*	*c*	*c*	*c*	..
Estonia	22.11	6.12	39.99	3.63	0.40	10.15
Finland	3.25	0.87	27.28	5.78	0.12	6.77
Germany	1.81	0.21	15.80	1.23	0.03	1.47
Greece	1.33	0.55	3.54	1.30	0.02	1.87
Guinea	0.34	0.03	*d*	*d*	*d*	..
Hungary	4.07	0.47	33.34	0.88	..	..
India	*d*	*d*	9.76	0.06	0.26	..
Jamaica	31.60	18.23	1.46	0.36	0.12	18.72
Japan	0.60	0.03	17.95	0.04	0.01	0.07
Luxembourg	..	..	..	..	..	..
Malaysia	2.13	0.20	1.83	0.00	0.08	0.29
Mexico	*c*	*c*	*c*	*c*	*c*	..
New Zealand	1.35	0.22	13.81	2.45	0.29	2.97
Papua New Guinea	..	..	..	..	..	..
Peru	1.41	1.06	0.42	0.10	0.02	1.18
Philippines	16.89	3.61	*d*	*d*	*d*	..
Poland	2.61	0.27	14.23	0.16	0.01	0.44
Republic of Moldova	17.06	0.63	..	..	..	..
Romania	4.32	0.12	*d*	*d*	*d*	..
Russian Federation	..	..	..	..	..	..
Singapore	1.62	--	9.89	..	..	..
Slovakia	2.38	0.36	13.24	0.58	..	..
South Africa	64.64	26.63	..	..	..	..
Spain	1.58	0.19	5.92	0.55	0.26	1.01
Sweden	1.35	0.31	15.65	1.95	0.05	2.31
Trinidad and Tobago	9.48	3.42	8.08	0.08	0.54	4.04

State	Homicide: Total	Homicide: Homicide involving firearms (1)	Suicide: Total	Suicide: Suicide involving firearms (2)	Accidental death involving firearms (3)	Death involving firearms (total, 1, 2 and 3)[a]
Tunisia	c	c	c	0.02	--	..
Uganda	..	..	..	..	..	..
United Kingdom	1.40[e]	0.13[e]	7.55	0.33	0.02	0.57
United Republic of Tanzania	7.42	0.50	0.88	0.02	0.02	0.53
United States	8.95	6.24	11.54	7.23	0.58	14.05
Viet Nam	0.77	0.12	c	0.02	0.04	0.18
Zambia	10.74	5.37	0.68	0.15	0.02	5.54
States providing figures	36	33	28	28	27	23
Minimum figure	0.04	--	0.42	0.005	--	0.07
Maximum figure	64.64	26.63	39.99	7.23	0.75	26.97
Average figure	7.86	3.28	11.56	1.28	0.17	4.90

Note: Figures are for the latest year reported. The years differ, depending on the State and on the type of death.

The data are "as reported" in the survey. There are often differences in the way in which States compile statistics. International comparisons should therefore be made with caution.

[a]The total may include figures for different years.
[b]Figures are for Buenos Aires only (population: approximately 3 million).
[c]No response.
[d]Not reasonably available (i.e. cannot be obtained with reasonable effort).
[e]For Great Britain only.

45. Table 6 also shows the total homicide rate and the rate for homicides involving firearms. Those statistics were the most complete, as 33 States provided data for both. Again, there was considerable variability among countries; the number of homicides involving firearms ranged from 0 to 26.63 per 100,000 persons. The proportion of total homicides accounted for by homicides involving firearms ranged from 0 to 88 per cent; the average proportion was 27 per cent.

46. Fifteen States provided data on the extent to which homicides involving firearms were committed with handguns. The proportion of homicides involving firearms accounted for by homicides committed with handguns, in one year ranged from 0 to 92 per cent. The proportions for each State were as follows: Argentina, 0 per cent; Brazil, 85 per cent; Canada, 54 per cent; Greece, 3 per cent; Japan, 88 per cent; Malaysia, 51 per cent; New Zealand, 0 per cent; Singapore, no homicides; Slovakia, 79 per cent; South Africa, 68 per cent; Spain, 50 per cent; United Kingdom, 92 per cent; United Republic of Tanzania, 1 per cent; United States, 83 per cent; and Viet Nam, 21 per cent.

47. The survey also yielded some limited data on the number of law enforcement officers killed while on duty, the relationship between offenders and victims, victim gender and sexual assault in which firearms were involved. The proportion of all homicides involving firearms accounted for by those in which the offender and victim were related ranged from 0 to 80 per cent.

VII. RECENT POLICY INITIATIVES BY STATES

48. Many States reported significant policy or programme initiatives on firearms that had occurred within the previous five years or that were taking place at the time of the survey. Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia and United Kingdom reported comprehensive reforms of their legislation on firearms. Major legislative reform was reported to be under discussion or pending in Brazil, Denmark, Finland, India, Jamaica, Poland and South Africa. Eight States reported that no further significant changes were being contemplated in those areas.

49. Twenty-five States reported changes in legislation or administration regarding the civilian ownership of firearms, including new licensing requirements, more detailed information required in licence applications, safety training or psychological tests required to become eligible for a licence and stricter penalties for offences involving firearms. Certain European States noted changes to conform with Council of the European Communities directive 91/447/EEC.

50. Twenty-five States reported significant initiatives to prevent firearm smuggling and other illegal dealings in firearms. Such initiatives included the tightening of border controls; the use of new technology and the training of personnel in border control; increased cooperation with other States (e.g. bilateral agreements); agreements with enterprises in private industry, including freight companies and airlines; and stricter penalties for smuggling offences. Some States had established firearm investigative units.

51. Twenty-four States reported particular initiatives by law enforcement agencies to improve coordination or the overall effectiveness of regulations on firearms. Such initiatives included the introduction or the development of computers for maintaining records; the creation of new registries of information on firearms or firearm owners; the training of law enforcement officers in firearm identification and ballistics; and cooperative arrangements with law enforcement agencies of other States.

52. Twenty-one States reported on initiatives to promote public awareness of firearm regulations and firearm safety. Australia, South Africa and the United Kingdom indicated that amnesty programmes, whereby persons turned in illegal or unwanted firearms, were useful for promoting public awareness. Some States also noted that firearm associations and interest groups were helpful in promoting public awareness.

53. States were asked whether an incident involving firearms had occurred in recent years that might have raised public concern and focused the attention of government or law enforcement agencies on the issue of firearm regulation. Twenty-seven States replied affirmatively.

54. Other international data sources (e.g. WHO, Interpol, the World Customs Organization and the international crime (victim) survey), yielded a range of useful information on levels of firearm-related harm. In their current form, however, those sources did not permit an accurate and comprehensive measurement of comparative levels of harm. While they appeared to present widely varying estimates of the extent of firearm-related harm for the same countries, such variances were largely attributable to differing methods of compilation.

55. Crime victim surveys, for example, included incidents that did not come to the attention of the police; the resulting figures usually exceeded those obtained from counts of incidents reported to police. In addition, police statistics often included attempted homicides in their counts of homicides, resulting in higher numbers than mortality statistics compiled by health authorities. Police record-keeping methodologies often differed from country to country (e.g. some counted numbers of victims, others counted numbers of incidents) and for that reason were difficult to compare at the international level.

56. The most consistent set of information on firearm-related harm seemed to be the firearm-related death statistics compiled by WHO from internationally standardized reports on causes of death. The firearm-specific data included in the WHO database, however, had only been analysed for a limited number of countries. The data obtained by the international study on firearm regulation involving numbers and rates for homicides and suicides seemed to be comparable to those included in the WHO analysis.

57. Very little comparative information was found on firearm regulation or trafficking.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE STUDY

58. The expert group unanimously agreed that the undertaking of the study had provided the first truly international comparative description of the levels of firearm-related harm and the national and international efforts being made to regulate firearms and to reduce that harm.

59. Although the study data at the time did not permit an accurate measurement of the levels of firearm-related harm, it did point to significant harm flowing from the unlawful or other unauthorized use of firearms as evidenced by the following:

(a) Firearm-related deaths in responding States, including suicides, homicides, and accidents, ranged from 0.07 to 26.97 per 100,000 persons;

(b) Firearm-related suicides in responding States ranged from nearly 0 to 7.23 per 100,000 persons;

(c) Firearm-related accidents in responding States ranged from 0 to 0.75 per 100,000 persons;

(d) Firearm-related homicides in responding States ranged from 0 to 26.63 per 100,000 persons. In many countries law enforcement officials were among the victims;

(e) The share of firearm-related homicides that involved handguns ranged from 0 to 92 per cent;

(f) The share of firearm-related homicides in which there was a domestic or family relationship between the offender and the victim ranged from 0 to 80 per cent. Only 16 States provided such information, and there was little information provided on the other characteristics of victims of firearm-related harm (e.g. gender or age).

60. Other international data sources (e.g. WHO, Interpol, the World Customs Organization, the international crime (victim) survey) also did not provide accurate and comprehensive comparative data on levels of firearm-related harm and of firearm regulation.

61. In recent years, many States had found it necessary to increase their levels of firearm regulation. In the survey data there was also evidence that significant incidents of firearm-related harm occurring in one country may have had an impact on the policy-formulation process in relation to firearms control in other countries. However, the survey data did not permit a comprehensive comparative assessment of the levels of such regulation.

62. Thus, existing sources of information, including the international study on firearm regulation, still could not be used to evaluate the comparative effectiveness of current levels of firearm regulation in reducing harm.

63. Other general findings at the country level included the following:

(a) The majority of responding States regulated the ownership, import, export and manufacture of firearms at the national level, although in many countries the administration and enforcement of those regulations were the responsibility of regional and even local governments;

(b) The majority of responding States regulated firearms to some extent; they prohibited the ownership of certain types of long guns and handguns and they restricted the ownership of all others;

(c) The majority of responding States prohibited the import, export and manufacture of certain long guns and handguns. The majority of States also restricted the import, export and manufacture of all long guns and handguns. Most States had adopted similar policies with regard to the levels of prohibition and restriction in relation to both the import and export of firearms, although several States that restricted all importation of guns did not place the same degree of restriction on the exportation of guns. Very few States reported no restriction or prohibition of any kind;

(d) Most responding States permitted the ownership of firearms, including handguns, for the purposes of hunting, target shooting, collection and protection of person or property. Thirty- nine States imposed a licensing or similar requirement for the purchase of all long guns and handguns;

(e) Levels of firearm ownership varied greatly among countries. The rate of individual firearm ownership in each country ranged from less than 1 to more than 120 per 1,000 persons. The number of firearms ranged from less than 1 to more than 400 per 1,000 persons;

(f) It was generally accepted by the States in the survey that illegal firearms, whether stolen, illegally imported, or manufactured, were utilized by criminals or organized criminal groups. Many States reported some level of illegal importation of firearms. Fewer States reported a problem with the illegal exportation of firearms. Most responding States did not have substantial evidence of the illegal manufacture of firearms;

(g) States reported that a wide range of information sources were used to trace the origins of recovered firearms but that inadequacies in databases and inter-agency cooperation posed significant obstacles;

(h) In virtually all countries, police were trained in the identification of firearms and in the use of firearm-tracing technology;

(i) States generally reported severe maximum penalties, including lengthy terms of imprisonment for offenders convicted of crimes involving the smuggling of and illegal dealings in firearms.

64. At the international level, the findings included the following:

(a) Efforts to regulate the importation and exportation of firearms, in most countries, were governed by trade and customs laws and agreements; not by specific agreements relating to firearms;

(b) Certain regional agreements were identified by responding States, but few States had entered into formal agreements on the regulation of firearms with other States, particularly at the bilateral level;

(c) Judging from the descriptive case study information provided by the respondents, there seemed to be a need for enhanced international cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of offences involving the unlawful importation or exportation of firearms, particularly where the firearms had been transported across one or more countries between the time of their manufacture and their ultimate recovery by law enforcement officers.

65. In regard to the survey instrument, it was concluded that if the survey initiative was to be ongoing, then the survey instrument should be streamlined, both by reducing the overall number of questions and by pre-coding several open-ended questions.

Notes

[a]United Nations, *World Population Prospects: the 1996 Revision*, forthcoming.

[b]*Official Journal of the European Communities*, No. L256/51, 13 September 1991.